

SEVEN SEAS

CPO INITIATION FORMAT

Part of the CPO Creed says that everything that occurs during initiation has meaning. It is important that we all be able to explain the meaning of everything we do, ergo all parts of the initiation should be done with intention and foresight. There should be a lesson associated with each part of the initiation. That is not to say that the whole process should not be fun, as a matter of course it should be. The initiation can be the catalyst or catharsis for a stronger CPO mess. So to facilitate those results the following format is offered for your consideration:

The Selectees are brought before a Court and a jury "not of their" peers. They are found to be too green, not traveled enough and not yet worthy to be accepted as Chief Petty Officers. The judge decrees that they must embark upon a journey of enlightenment, one that will take them to each of the Seven Seas. Once they have completed their journey, a circumnavigation of the globe, they will return to the court to be judged. The judge prior to getting them underway gives them each 7 Pearls of wisdom. They are told to safeguard those pearls for each is valuable, so valuable in fact that for each Pearl returned they will receive credit (\$25?) off their fine.

(this scenario allows for a number of things to happen, it allows you to deal with the selectees in sequential orders and keeps the line moving. Since there are 7 seas (stations) there will be a need for Safety observers at each station which keeps more of the mess involved. At each station there will be a lesson attached to it. It could be simply a question such as "When is the Chief's birthday?" If the selectee gets it right he keeps the pearl if wrong a pearl is taken away. Also you can incorporate your props into a "leap of faith" at these stations. You can have a prop at each station or just some of them. The benefits of this system is that your entire process now has a theme, the selectees and the cpo mess can readily identify with the process and remember it. Most importantly there will be a reason for each task. There need not be a leap of faith at every station but there should be some tasking there. Also selectees often are asked to perform a skit of sorts, I find it best to have the skit performed prior to the commencement of the journey so the costumes are not messed up. To continue)

The selectee gets underway for the 7 seas (ancient or modern),

Each station or sea should have at least one Safety observer and one "Ancient Mariner" to conduct the testing. To have them in costume greatly enhances the effect. The more you can set the scene the better for each station.

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Atlantic - Ancient Mariner asks test question "What is the Chief's Birthday?" takes one pearl if wrong

Selectee then undergoes first leap of Faith e.g. "Walk the Plank" This is the mousetrap prop. A plank with set mousetraps is set up for the selectee to navigate. Then the selectee is blindfolded and asked to demonstrate their faith by now walking the plank. A "safe" plank is substituted and after the selectee completes the task is queried "What did you learn?" Mariner provides answer: "That the righteous path is strewn with traps and that I can rely on my fellow chiefs to help me navigate them safely"

Caribbean: *Ancient Mariner*- Q. "Who was the first Chief Petty Officer?" A. "There was no first Chief Petty Officer due to the fact that nearly all ratings carried as Petty Officers First Class from 1885 were automatically shifted to the Chief Petty Officer level."

LEAP OF FAITH: Must walk on the coral reefs (this is the potato chip trick) The selectee is shown a box of broken glass and asked to jump over it. Then blindfolded and ask to do the same. The box is substituted for a box filled with potato chips and the selectee conveniently lands in the chips. Upon completion the *Ancient Mariner* asks what did you learn? A. There are areas in life where you need to tread carefully and that even should I take a misstep the CPO mess will be there to help me.

Pacific – *Ancient Mariner* -Q "What is the origin of the fouled anchor?" A. It was first used in the temple of Poseidon and indicates good fortune.

Selectee then is asked to sing Anchors Aweigh

Indian - *Ancient Mariner* -Q. Why is the combination hat so important to Chief Petty Officers? A. In days of Old Chiefs still wore dungarees to work and the combination cap was the easiest way to distinguish a chief from the rest of the enlisted Sailors.

Leap of Faith - "Old Ironsides" This Is the bowling ball trick. Upon completion the *Ancient Mariner* asks "What did you learn?" A. That as a chief my character will at times come under attack, that I may be bombarded. But If I rely upon my fellow chiefs I will be able to withstand the attacks.

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Arctic- Ancient Mariner Q. When were Senior Chief and Master Chief created? A. 1958

LEAP OF FAITH: Wheel of Fortune, the weighted wheel trick. It could read GUILTY/NOT GUILTY, or LIFE/DEATH, or WORTHY/NOT WORTHY, or CPO/PETTY OFFICER After spinning the wheel and losing the *Ancient Mariner* asks “What did you learn?” A. That I can not always control my circumstances and that I will need the help of the Chief’s Mess to overcome some of them.

Antarctic Ancient Mariner Q. Who was the first MCPON? A. GMCM Delbert Black

LEAP OF FAITH: Selectee is asked to enter Davy Jones locker (a coffin usually full of ice) while in there a variety of questions may be asked. Upon release from the coffin... *Ancient Mariner* asks “What did you learn?” A. That Petty Officer _____ has died and that I to become a Chief Petty Officer I need to be reborn.

Mediterranean: Ancient Mariner Q. Who is Peter Tomich? A. Chief Watertender, Medal of Honor Winner from the attack on Pearl Harbor (USS Utah) the Senior Enlisted Academy Building is named after him

LEAP OF FAITH: The CPO branding iron. Selectee is shown a Red-hot branding Iron and then blindfolded and a VERY cold Branding Iron is applied to the skin. *Ancient Mariner* asks: What did you learn? A. That becoming a Chief involves more than just outward appearances that it is internal and that wherever I go in uniform or civilian attire, on or off duty I am first and foremost a Chief Petty Officer.

Upon completion of the Journey the selectee returns to the court to be judged. The judge counts the remaining pearls, reviews the charge book, hears the charges from the prosecutor then hears the defense attorney. After weigh all of the evidence he asks the “Jury not of their peers for a verdict” after the guilty verdict is rendered the Judge now assesses total fine and proclaims the selectee a Chief.

Questions and props can and should be substituted to suit each commands needs. I just picked these to serve as examples. Questions should support the naval heritage training conducted on each ship or station and the props should also be chosen as most appropriate for each command.